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Dear Peter,

I am writing to thank you for your contributions during Grand Committee on the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill last week, and for raising the important issue of the role of the Office of Rail and Road during HS2 construction and operation. As promised, this letter follows up on some of the concerns you raised during the debate.

Clause 34 of the Phase 2a hybrid Bill is concerned with ensuring the Office of Rail and Road includes an objective under section 4(1) of the Railways Act 1993, so that it facilitates the construction of Phase 2a of High Speed 2 and the railway works that are set out in section 1(1)(b).

The wider role of the Office of Rail and Road is to ensure passenger and freight train operators have fair access to the rail network. In relation to this role in regulating access over the railway network, it will apply to HS2 services in the same way as it does to other rail operators, when the railway has been built.

It is my view that it is not necessary for further provision to be made in the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill.

If you have any further questions, I would of course be happy to answer them. I look forward to a robust debate at Report stage.

I am copying this letter to all Noble Lords who spoke at Grand Committee and I will also place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

*Yours,
Charlotte*

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON